

BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

March 21, 1963

SUBJECT: Presidents' Meeting at San Jose

QUESTION: What in your view were the main accomplishments of the Costa Rican meeting, especially with reference to joint efforts on the Cuban situation

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT:

The Presidents' Meeting was held in San Jose March 18-20 and ended with the signing of the Declaration of Central America and a final press communique which makes a general summary of the accomplishments of the meeting.

SUGGESTED POINTS IN REPLY:

The meeting was a very successful one. With respect to the problem of Cuba its main accomplishment has been precisely in the field where the threat is most menacing, namely the movement of money, propaganda, materials and people to and from Cuba for subversive purposes in Latin America. The Isthmian countries suggested that their Ministers of Government meet immediately to work out measures to control this traffic which offers a number of technical difficulties. Simply put, a traveller finds it easy to get to Cuba. He goes to a third country and the Cubans allow him to enter Cuba with a minimum of travel documents. Even when passports are marked "not valid for travel to Cuba," evasion is easy. The Cubans simply issue their visas on separate papers. This is a technical problem, so the appropriate ministers of government will meet to work out adequate measures. This, I might add, is in keeping with recommendations made by a special QAS committee.

The meeting at San Jose also agreed that additional surveillance and interception efforts within territorial waters would be instituted to stop clandestine aircraft and small boat traffic from Cuba.

Now, I said in San Jose that we intended to "build a wall around Cuba...a wall of men determined to protect their own freedom and sovereignty." And the other accomplishments of the meeting are related to this.

We reviewed the accomplishments of the Alliance for Progress and agreed to several measures that will accelerate the pace of the Alliance.

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The Central American countries pledged themselves to complete the Central American economic community, to move toward regional planning, and to establish common fiscal, monetary and social policies within the program of economic integration.

We agreed that the several regional organizations accomplishing integration be strengthened, and that the US make an immediate substantial initial contribution to the Central American Bank for Economic Integration to assist in carrying out regional development projects.

We also agreed that loans be made available to the Bank to provide technical assistance and to conduct economic feasibility surveys for regional development.

And it was also agreed that funds be made available to train the personnel who will be needed to put into effect the plans for regional integration, largely through CSUCA, the Superior Council of Central American Universities.

There was agreement to create a regional home loan division in the Central American Bank for Economic Integration to stimulate the development of private home ownership.

And we agreed to create a trade and promotion office to attract private foreign investment to Central America.

Panama expressed a desire to associate itself with the Central American economic integration effort.

There was also discussion of the need to cooperate in a program to stabilize the price of coffee, a primary export commodity, and there was agreement that the International Coffee Agreement, which was created as a result of the Punta del Este recommendations, would be the instrument to achieve this purpose.

These were the main achievements of the meeting. They are substantial. The problems still to be overcome by the Alliance for Progress are formidable, but the achievements of the San Jose meeting are impressive by any measure.